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Gardner-Webb University Awards Nearly 450 Degrees During Summer Commencement Ceremonies

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Office of University Communications

August 5, 2013

Two Separate Ceremonies Honor Hundreds of Graduates

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner–Webb University hosted Summer Commencement on Monday, Aug. 5 in the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Nearly 450 graduates were honored during the two ceremonies.

Morning Graduate Programs Ceremony (10 a.m.)

Several morning graduates were honored for their achievements and participated in the ceremony in a variety of ways. Angela Boyd (Chester, S.C.) earned a Master of Divinity and was a featured commencement speaker. She discussed the concept of “koinonia,” the Greek term for fellowship. “Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined the joy of learning in an environment that lives up to its creed *For God and Humanity*,” she shared. “I have been privy to a delightful journey with phenomenal people engaging in ‘koinonia’ through prayer, encouragement, discussion, play, teamwork, and making contributions to meet the needs of others... I thank God for allowing me to come to Gardner-Webb.”



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/4GUAQLi9o2s>

Tanya Hudson is a native of Nova Scotia, Canada. She earned her Doctor of Education and her educational journey included life-threatening health complications. She believes Gardner-Webb has played a pivotal role in shaping the chapters of her life that have yet to unfold. “Our professors knew who we were and we knew them,” she offered. “We had home numbers, emails, and cell phone contacts and we were encouraged to reach out if we needed to, knowing we were not in this alone. Six years later, I am not only continuing to progress professionally and personally, but I am walking in a spirit of deliverance. GWU planted that foundation in my life.”

The University awarded two honorary doctorates during the morning ceremony. Robert and Carolyn Tucker, who donated \$5.5 million to construct the transformational Tucker Student Center in 2012, each received a Doctor of Humane Letters.

The Tuckers are the founders of the successful business Shoe Show, headquartered in Concord, N.C. The business is over 50 years old and currently has over 1100 locations across the United States. Their daughter, Lisa Tucker, is a 1989 graduate and former volleyball player for Gardner-Webb. She has also remained committed to the University for two decades and currently serves as a trustee. Lisa works in the family business as a vice president.

Dr. Frank Bonner discussed the philanthropic hearts and generous spirits shared by the Tuckers. “Robert and Carolyn’s love for God and family, an enduring commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and ways to advance God’s kingdom, as well as their outstanding professional achievements are a shining example to our students and to us all,” Bonner stated. “Gardner-Webb University is enriched by our association with the Tuckers.”

Afternoon Traditional Undergraduate and GOAL Programs Ceremony (3 p.m.)

The afternoon ceremony featured graduates of Gardner-Webb’s Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners (GOAL) program and students who successfully completed traditional undergraduate programs. Academic awards were given to two individuals for maintaining the highest grade point average (GPA) in their respective classes. The GOAL Scholastic Achievement Award was given to Caroline Elizabeth Torres (Dobson, N.C.), who earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Kiersten Aleana Justice (Mebane, N.C.) received the Senior Scholastic Achievement Award, given to a student in the traditional undergraduate program. Justice earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology.

Chandler Durham (Lyman, S.C.), who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies, offered a commencement address during the ceremony. For Durham, the spiritual formation component of his education has become a valued treasure. “I was fortunate to enroll in several classes focused on community service and social issues,” Durham reflected. “From serving in a local hospice house to dedicating a semester toward examining the destructive

industry of modern slavery, these experiences stimulated spiritual growth and are a testament that Gardner-Webb cultivates students not only academically but spiritually as well.”

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University’s purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).